GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4809
ANSWERED ON:28.04.2008
ARMY EXERCISE IN POKHRAN
Gandhi Smt. Maneka;Yerrannaidu Shri Kinjarapu

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether three soldiers were killed and two critically injured while firing 120 mm mortar bombs during the exercise at Pokhran firing range;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether an inquiry has been made with regard to the mishap;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the persons responsible for the mishap; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to check recurrence of such incidents?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e): The accident on 19.3.2008 was caused due to bore premature, while the shell exploded within the barrel of 120MM mortar resulting in bursting of barrel into pieces. This resulted in three fatalities and two injuries. All such instances are investigated through a Court of Inquiry to ascertain the cause and reasons leading to the accident. As an immediate action to prevent such recurrence, the suspect 'lot' of ammunition used during firing has been segregated and banned from firing.